



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

October 14, 2005

News Release

LAREDO MARINE CORPS RECRUITER CONVICTED OF ALIEN SMUGGLING

LAREDO, Texas — A U.S. Marine Corps recruiter stationed here was convicted Tuesday of transporting three illegal Mexican alien women on July 22, announced U.S. Attorney Chuck Rosenberg, Southern District of Texas.

Victor Domingo Ramirez, 27, now faces up to 10 years in prison and up to a \$250,000.00 fine for his crime.

During the re-arraignment hearing, the United States presented evidence proving that on July 22, while in uniform and driving a U.S. Government van, Ramirez knowingly transported three illegal aliens.

The evidence showed that at about 5 p.m., a Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) trooper conducted a traffic stop on a United States government minivan driven by Ramirez as he traveled northbound near the 22-mile marker of IH-35 north of Laredo. At the time, Ramirez was an active-duty member of the U.S. Marine Corps stationed in Laredo, Texas, as a recruiter. The minivan was an official government vehicle assigned to the Marine Corps recruiting station in Laredo, and Ramirez was wearing his "Class A" Marine uniform (blue pants, short-sleeve khaki shirts).

Three female passengers were in the minivan. All three women were aliens from Mexico who had entered the United States illegally. Prior to the traffic stop, Ramirez had already driven the van and aliens through the U.S. Border Patrol immigration checkpoint on IH-35 near the 15-mile marker. Ramirez had told the Border Patrol agents at the checkpoint that the three women were U.S. citizens.

After making the stop, the DPS trooper called U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Special agents responded to the scene and arrested Ramirez. Ramirez' arrest was the result of an ongoing ICE investigation involving the assistance of a confidential source (CS) of information. The investigation included recorded meetings and conversations between Ramirez and the CS. Ramirez is recorded discussing alien smuggling with the CS, including the alien smuggling deal that resulted in his arrest. In the recorded conversations, Ramirez assured the CS he would get the aliens through the Border Patrol checkpoint along I-35 without problems by using a government van and wearing his military uniform.

The second U.S. Marine recruiter charged in this case, Vic Martin Martinez, 31, also of Laredo, has also been convicted after pleading guilty to knowingly making a materially false statement to federal agents. Martinez, who rode as a passenger in the government vehicle driven by Ramirez, lied to federal agents about his reasons for traveling to San Antonio in the government minivan with Ramirez. Martinez pleaded guilty Oct. 11, and faces a maximum punishment of five years in federal prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Both Ramirez and Martinez have been in federal custody since their arrest in July, and will remain in federal custody pending their sentencing hearings, which are scheduled for Feb. 13, 2006, in Laredo.

The investigation resulting in these successful prosecutions was conducted by special agents of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, with the assistance of the U.S. Border Patrol and the Texas Department of Public Safety. Assistant U.S. Attorney Arthur R. Jones prosecuted the case.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.